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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/531,449

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Yasuhiro Shigeyama

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EXAMINER

COLLINS, MICHAEL

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/531,449	Applicant(s) SHIGEYAMA ET AL.	
	Examiner MICHAEL K. COLLINS	Art Unit 3651	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 June 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see **REMARKS**, filed 6/13/2008, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Yuyama et al. (USP 6,789,996).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- Claim 2 recites the limitation "the two sides of the pushing direction" in line 2.

There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and

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the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148

USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining

obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

6. Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Yuyama et al. (USP 6,789,996).

Regarding claim 1, Yuyama et al. disclose a drug dispenser (1) comprising a drug case (3) for containing a plurality of drug packages (10) stacked in a vertical direction (see Figure 3b), each of the plurality of drug packages being a rectangular package having a flange (10a) at an upper side of the package (see Figure 6), and a pushing mechanism for pushing out the lowermost drug package in a horizontal direction (see Figures 9(a)-9(c)), wherein a guide member (11) is provided fixedly on an inner surface of a side wall of the drug case separately from the pushing mechanism for supporting and guiding the flange of the second drug package when the lowermost drug package is being pushed out (see Figure 3b), the guide member being provided in a pushing direction of the pushing mechanism.

Regarding claim 2, Yuyama et al. disclose the drug dispenser of Claim 1, wherein the guide member (11) is provided on at least any one side of the two sides of the pushing direction (see Figure 3).

Regarding claim 3, Yuyama et al. disclose the drug dispenser of Claim 1, wherein the guide member (11) is extended toward a downstream side of the pushing direction (see Figure 3).

Regarding claim 4, Yuyama et al. disclose the drug dispenser of Claim 1, wherein the guide member (11) supports and guides the flange of the drug package on an upstream side of the pushing direction (see Figure 3).

Regarding claim 5, Yuyama et al. disclose a dispenser (1) for dispensing drugs contained in a package (17) having an upper flange (see Figure 8), said dispenser comprising:

- an upper case (3) for containing a plurality of the packages stacked in a vertical direction (see Figures 2 and 3(b));
- a lower case (7) connected to a lower end of said upper case (see Figure 5(a));
- a pushing mechanism (8), disposed in said lower case, for pushing out and dispensing the lowermost package in a horizontal pushing direction; and
- at least one guide member (11) fixedly disposed on an inner sidewall of said lower case for supporting and guiding the flange of the second lowermost package when the lowermost package is pushed out by said pushing mechanism, said guide member fixed on said inner sidewall so as to be immovable and disposed above said pushing mechanism (see Figures 5(a)-(b)).

Regarding claim 6, Yuyama et al. disclose the dispenser of claim 5, wherein said pushing mechanism (8) comprises two rails, a screw disposed below and extending

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along the rails, and a pushing claw adapted to be driven in a forward direction and in a reverse direction upon rotation of the screw (see column 2 lines 42-47).

Regarding claim 7, Yuyama et al. disclose the dispenser as claimed in claim 5, wherein said at least one guide member comprises a pair of guide members disposed on opposite side walls of said lower case.

Regarding claim 8, Yuyama et al. disclose the dispenser as claimed in claim 6, wherein said at least one guide member comprises a pair of guide members disposed on opposite side walls of said lower case and said guide members protrude from the side walls of said lower case and are disposed above said rails so that a bottom surface of the lowermost package will not contact the rails when supported in a horizontal position by said guide members (see Figure 11).

Regarding claim 9, Yuyama et al. disclose the dispenser as claimed in claim 8, wherein said guide members function to support the flange of the second lowermost drug package when an upstream end of the second lowermost package, with respect to the pushing direction, drops due to the lowermost package being pushed out by said pushing mechanism.

Regarding claim 10, Yuyama et al. disclose the dispenser of claim 6, wherein said pushing claw is normally disposed in a vertical orientation and is adapted to be moved to a horizontal orientation when driven in the reverse direction.

Conclusion

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7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL K. COLLINS whose telephone number is (571)272-8970. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am - 5:00 pm M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene O. Crawford can be reached on (571) 272-6911. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

M.K.C.
9/30/2008

/Patrick H. Mackey/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 3653